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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LUANDA 000673

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TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM PTER AO

SUBJECT: ANGOLA - GRA READY TO SIGN PEACE ACCORD IN CABINDA

REF: A. LUANDA 00096

1B. LUANDA 00196

1C. LUANDA 00683

1D. 05 STATE 171983

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CYNTHIA EFIRD FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

11. (C) Summary: Negotiations for a peace agreement between the GRA and the Cabindan Forum for Dialogue (FCD) are set to conclude on June 30, 2006. The agreement recognizes Cabinda as a part of Angola, grants special economic status and local governance powers to Cabinda, and condemns further acts of terrorism and political subversion. The FCD, currently under the leadership of Antonio Bento Bembe, has split into two camps) those that support Bembe and the accord and those who do not. Representatives from Mplabanda and the anti-accord faction of the FCD are lobbying for the USG not to support the accord, saying it lacks the support of the Cabindan people. In the Embassy's view, this accord, while obviously not satisfying all factions, is the best deal the FCD could have hoped to negotiate and offers a chance for a lasting peace in Cabinda. It also satisfies the long-standing U.S. policy objective of a political settlement to the Cabinda dispute based on talks, not violence. End Summary.

GRA and FCD at the End of Negotiations

12. (U) The office of the President of the GRA issued a press release indicating that on June 30, 2006, in Massabi, Cabinda, the GRA and the Cabindan Forum for Dialogue (FCD) will hold conclusive talks leading to a memorandum of understanding between the two parties. The release stated that the GRA delegation was led by Presidential Advisor, General Helder Vieira Dias &Kopelipa.⁸ Antonio Bento Bembe led the FCD negotiation.

13. (U) The release affirms that the FCD recognizes the validity of the Constitution and all current Angolan law, reiterating their &unequivocal acceptance of the Republic of Angola as a united and indivisible state.⁸ The document further states that both the GRA and FCD reject any attempt to disrupt the political or constitutional law of Angola, and condemn, without reservation, all acts of political subversion or terrorism. The GRA has agreed to give Cabinda special economic status and increased involvement in provincial and local governance.

Splintered FCD Taking Separate Positions

14. (C) The FCD has splintered into two groups - those that support Bembe and those who believe that Bembe does not represent the Cabindan people. In a June 30, 2006 meeting at the Embassy requested by Agostinho Chicaia and Raul Danda, the President of Mplabanda and spokesperson for the FCD

respectively, they lobbied that the USG not support the peace accord on grounds that the negotiation process was opaque and the accord lacked the support of the Cabindan people. Both noted that they had turned down Vice-Ministerial positions offered by the GRA in exchange for supporting the accord. They alleged that Bembe was closer to the GRA than the FCD, noting that he had been offered a position as the Vice-Chief of Staff of the Angolan Army and had been traveling on an Angolan diplomatic passport. They were adamant that this accord was not supported by the true leadership of the FLEC nor Mplabanda and therefore was unlikely to be meaningful in the long-term.

Comment) Peace Accord is a Done Deal

¶15. (C) As suggested Ref A, Bento Bembe has been the key interlocutor between the FCD and the GRA. Bembe and his faction grasped the reality of the FCD's weak position vis-a-vis the GRA following the GRA's disruption of external support to Cabindan separatists and moved quickly after his arrest in Holland to bring the negotiations to a close. After the accord is signed, those unwilling to support the final outcome will likely face heavy GRA political pressure, and possible military action, to come in line with the agreement. The final Memorandum of Understanding should be published either this weekend or next week. According to Danda, the official signing of a Peace Accord will take place in South Africa and the GRA may ask the USG, the EU, and the UN to serve as official observers. These details have not been confirmed.

¶16. (SBU) Comment continued: Movement in the Cabindan peace

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process has been evident over the last several months as reported Refs A and B. The GRA has stepped up offers of economic development projects, encouraged meetings on civil society build and election training, and succeeded in having the Roman Catholic bishop seated in his Cathedral in Cabinda (Ref C). The GRA has detained local Cabindan separatist leaders for several hours following demonstrations or episodes of civil disobedience, but none remain in custody. The Angolan NGO Association for Justice, Peace, and Democracy (AJPD) has held human rights training for police in Cabinda and expects to move into training Angolan soldiers as well.

¶17. (C) Comment continued: Embassy requests talking points in the event that we are asked about our position on the accord. We recommend reiterating the long-standing USG policy of supporting a political solution that preserves the territorial integrity of Angola, encourages democratic processes and respect for human rights, and is the result of negotiation rather than violence. If asked about the status of Bembe himself, we will use previous guidance (Ref D).

¶18. (C) Comment continued: Due to the significant level of investment by U.S. companies in Cabinda. We recommend that we brief that major companies' local representatives immediately. End Comment.

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